

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for providing help within an interactive voice response application comprising the steps of:
 - determining an interactive voice response event corresponding to a request for help;
 - classifying said event as at least one of a default help request and a user initiated help request;
 - setting a time for receiving user input to a default value if said event is classified as said default help request; and,
 - setting said time for receiving user input to a value less than said default value if said event is classified as said user initiated help request, wherein said interactive voice response application takes programmatic action upon expiration of said time for receiving user input.
2. The method of claim 1, said classifying step further comprises the steps of:
 - if said interactive voice event corresponds to receiving a user input that said interactive voice response application fails to recognize as a valid input selection, classifying said event as said default help request.
3. The method of claim 1, said classifying step further comprises the steps of:
 - if said interactive voice event corresponds to a failure to receive user input for a specified duration, classifying said event as said default help request.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein said default value is at least six seconds and wherein said value less than said default value is at most three seconds.
5. A method for providing help within an interactive voice response application comprising the steps of:
 - determining an interactive voice response event corresponding to a help message request;

- setting a time-out threshold to a default time;
 - if said event includes an explicit user request for help, decreasing said time-out threshold;
 - audibly presenting a first help message;
 - once said first help message has been presented, starting a no-response timer;
 - and
 - if said no-response timer exceeds said time-out threshold, audibly presenting a second help message.
6. The method of claim 5, further comprising the steps of:
- once said second help message has been presented, starting a no-response timer; and
 - if said no-response timer for said second help message exceeds said time-out threshold, performing a previously established IVR operation.
7. The method of claim 6, wherein said previously established IVR operation includes resetting said time-out threshold to said default time.
8. The method of claim 6, wherein said previously established IVR operation includes audibly presenting a help message.
9. The method of claim 6, wherein said previously established IVR operation includes at least one of cycling back to the initial help message, establishing a connection with a human agent, and establishing a connection with an automated system.
10. The method of claim 5, wherein said action which initialized said first help message includes at least one from the group consisting of said explicit user selection action, a no-response event, and a no-match event.
11. The method of claim 5, further comprising the steps of:

after said presentation of said first help message has begun, receiving an explicit user request for help; and

if said non-response threshold equals said default time, decreasing said time-out threshold.

12. The method of claim 5, wherein said decreased time-out threshold is at most three seconds.

13. The method of claim 5, wherein said default time is at least six seconds.

14. A machine-readable storage having stored thereon, a computer program having a plurality of code sections, said code sections executable by a machine for causing the machine to perform the steps of:

determining an interactive voice response event corresponding to a request for help;

classifying said event as at least one of a default help request and a user initiated help request;

setting a time for receiving user input to a default value if said event is classified as said default help request; and

setting said time for receiving user input to a value less than said default value if said event is classified as said user initiated help request, wherein a interactive voice response application takes programmatic action upon expiration of said time for receiving user input.

15. The machine-readable storage of claim 14, said classifying step further comprises the steps of:

if said interactive voice event corresponds to receiving a user input that said interactive voice response application fails to recognize as a valid input selection, classifying said event as said default help request.

16. The machine-readable storage of claim 14, said classifying step further

comprises the steps of:

if said interactive voice event corresponds to a failure to receive user input for a specified duration, classifying said event as said default help request.

17. The machine-readable storage of claim 14, wherein said default value is at least six seconds and wherein said value less than said default value is at most three seconds.

18. A machine-readable storage having stored thereon, a computer program having a plurality of code sections, said code sections executable by a machine for causing the machine to perform the steps of:

determining an interactive voice response event corresponding to a help message request;

setting a time-out threshold to a default time;

if said event includes an explicit user request for help, decreasing said time-out threshold;

audibly presenting a first help message;

once said first help message has been presented, starting a no-response timer; and

if said no-response timer exceeds said time-out threshold, audibly presenting a second help message.

19. The machine-readable storage of claim 18, further comprising the steps of:

once said second help message has been presented, starting a no-response timer; and

if said no-response timer for said second help message exceeds said time-out threshold, performing a previously established IVR operation.

20. The machine-readable storage of claim 19, wherein said previously established IVR operation includes resetting said time-out threshold to said default time.

21. The machine-readable storage of claim 19, wherein said previously established IVR operation includes audibly presenting a help message.
22. The machine-readable storage of claim 19, wherein said previously established IVR operation includes at least one of cycling back to the initial help message, establishing a connection with a human agent, and establishing a connection with an automated system.
23. The machine-readable storage of claim 18, wherein said action which initialized said first help message includes at least one from the group consisting of said explicit user selection action, a no-response event, and a no-match event.
24. The machine-readable storage of claim 18, further comprising the steps of:
 - after said presentation of said first help message has begun, receiving an explicit user request for help; and
 - if said non-response threshold equals said default time, decreasing said time-out threshold.
25. The machine-readable storage of claim 18, wherein said decreased time-out threshold is at most three seconds.
26. The machine-readable storage of claim 18, wherein said default time is at least six seconds.
27. A system for providing help within an interactive voice response application comprising:
 - means for determining an interactive voice response event corresponding to a request for help;
 - means for classifying said event as at least one of a default help request and a user initiated help request;
 - means for setting a time for receiving user input to a default value if said event is

classified as said default help request; and

means for setting said time for receiving user input to a value less than said default value if said event is classified as said user initiated help request, wherein said interactive voice response application takes programmatic action upon expiration of said time for receiving user input.

28. A system for providing help within an Interactive Voice Response application comprising the steps of:

means for determining an interactive voice response event corresponding to a request for help;

means for setting a time-out threshold to a default time;

means for decreasing said time-out threshold if said event includes an explicit user request for help;

means for audibly presenting a first help message;

means for starting a no-response timer once said first help message has been presented; and

means for audibly presenting a second help message if said no-response timer exceeds said time-out threshold.